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GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE
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LAND
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**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND**

**Monday, March 18, 2019
2:50 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 124/SENATE RESOLUTION 93
URGING THE GOVERNOR, IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, TO ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT A TREE
PLANTING PROGRAM.**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 124/Senate Resolution 93 urges the Governor, in coordination with the Department of Land and Natural Resources, to establish and implement a tree planting program. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of these measures and provides the following comments.**

The Department has several private landowner assistance programs available for land managers interested in improving and restoring their forested or formerly forested lands. Each of these programs, including the Forest Stewardship Program, Natural Area Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Urban and Community Forestry Program, and the Watershed Partnerships can support tree planting projects on private lands. Although these programs provide the framework for encouraging and supporting tree planting projects, with 66% of Hawaii's forest lands managed by private landowners, there is not sufficient funding in any of these programs to meet the demand or need for tree planting support.

Additionally, the Department has the ability to conduct and a need for tree planting across the public lands that it manages (equal to almost one-half of the land area in Hawai'i). For example, the Division of Forestry and Wildlife has identified over 180,000 acres just within the Forest Reserve System that would benefit from additional tree planting to improve watershed health and that would sequester carbon dioxide (equal to approximately 5 million to 7 million trees) should funding be made available.

Forest ecosystems not only provide the water that sustains our lives in the islands, they also prevent soil erosion that damages our coral reefs and sequester and store remarkable amounts of carbon dioxide. In fact, forest management and restoration is a powerful tool in mitigating climate change. Recent scientific estimates by the United States Geological Survey suggest that an additional four million metric tons of carbon, equal to 89% of Hawaii's annual ground transportation emissions, could be sequestered and stored by reforesting current non-native grass and shrub-lands under the jurisdiction of the Department.

The Department and partners have documented a five percent loss in urban tree canopy in a five year period on O'ahu, our most populous island. This equates to a removal of over 76,000 trees. The Department strongly supports actions, such as this one, to reverse this trend statewide. Trees in urban and rural areas encourage safer streets (by slowing traffic), reduce urban heat island effect, improve stormwater runoff and erosion, improve air quality, and sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these measures.

SR-93

Submitted on: 3/15/2019 2:44:34 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/18/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Will this be the planting of mamane tree to protect the endangered animals around Mauna Kea that will be directly influenced by the construction that every corporate, foreign country and person wants to have on Mauna Kea? Will this be planting that will assuage the sounds and destruction of the lands at PÅ• hakuloa? Planting trees should be a healing, purposeful, thoughtful endeavor. Certainly hope that this is what you mean with this SR93?